(e) The ISRO's Telemedicine programme has been supported by the major speciality hospitals in the country for providing tele-consultation and treatment to the remote district hospitals. Some of the speciality hospitals and the medical college hospitals which provide tele-consultation are either private or trust hospitals apart from the leading national institutions and Government hospitals thereby establishing a good private public partnership.

(f) Not applicable.

Sickle Cell Research Centre in Nagpur

2502. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to establish Sickle Cell Research Centre in Nagpur;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (c) The Indian Council of Medical Research under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has conducted a multicentric study on primitive tribal population with Nagpur and Pune as centres from Maharashtra State. Under this project a simple intervention method to reduce the sickle cell crisis in the affected individuals, were developed which included folic acid and Fersolate tablets to be given to cases of nutritional anemia and Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) with iron deficiency. Sickle cell anemia patients have been advised to take electrol powder and plenty of fluid during the evasoocclusive crisis. An improvement in Hb level has been observed in those cases who are taking the tablets regularly. Hepatitis B, H. influenzae and pneumococus vaccines were given to sickle cell anemia cases in Nagpur. Genetic counselling has been offered to the affected population. State Government has been requested to takeover intervention module developed under this programme. Apart from this, a number of other districts in Maharashtra have been studied by Council's Institute of Immunohaematology, Mumbai for screening of sickle cell anemia.

Parallel market of spurious drugs

†2503. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a parallel system is in place for manufacturing and marketing of spurious drugs in the country;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Department of Drugs and many State Governments have raided illegal drug manufacturing factories and supply networks over the years and exposed the racket and have taken legal action against the firms and people involved in it; and

(c) if so, the details thereof for the period from 2000 to 2005 alongwith the action taken in this regard, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Manufacture and sale of spurious/counterfeit drugs is a clandestine activity. The States/UTs Drugs Control Organisations, based on investigations and specific information, carry out raids to unearth such illegal activity.

(b) CBI and the Drugs Control Departments do carryout raids whenever information is available from different sources regarding illegal drug manufacturing and supply activities and actions have been taken against persons found indulging in such illegal activity.

(c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table.

Breakthrough in TB treatment

2504. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Delhi's National Institute of Immunology has identified five key genes that represent a breakthrough in treatment of TB;

(b) whether this would help to evolve better drugs for cure of TB; and

(c) what steps have been and are being taken to develop such effective drugs and the progress made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) It has been reported that Scientists at National Institute of Immunology have identified five genes that enable Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the TB causing bacterium of acquire the iron that it needs to sustain growth and promote infection.

(b) Targeting genes within this cluster may represent a good strategy for eventual development of potential candidate drugs against tuberculosis and other mycobacterial infections.